



# Connecticut EMS Chiefs Association

P.O. Box 2018

New Britain, Connecticut 0650-2018

Date: 28-February-2023

To: Joint Committee on Appropriations

From: Bruce Baxter, President

RE: GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED FY'24 BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS H.B. NO. 06659 (COMM) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 2025.

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Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Bruce Baxter. I am the President of the Connecticut EMS Chiefs Association (CTEMSA) and the CEO of New Britain Emergency Medical Services in the City of New Britain.

1. **CTEMSA urges the Appropriations Committee to support the Governor's recommendation for a broad-based review of all Medicaid rates and fee setting processes, levels of payments and resulting access implications, as well as the development of a ranking system form all rates to help prioritize rate setting policies that will improve member outcomes and decrease long term costs.**
2. **CTEMSA urges the Appropriations Committee to Increase the State's Medicaid Ambulance Reimbursement Fee Schedule to 100% of the Medicare Ambulance Fee Schedule Allowable Rates.**

During the previous legislative session, Public Act 22-118 established an EMS Working Group to examine issues with third party reimbursement for ambulance services in Connecticut with a focus on Medicaid as well as private/commercial health insurance plans; Work force Issues and the delivery of emergency medical services in CT inclusive of Mobile Integrated Health Care.

The multi-disciplinary work group included representatives from EMS, DPH, DSS, the Legislature, CHA and other health care association related representatives. Meetings commenced in September 2022 and concluded in January 2023. The findings of the Work Group were included in ***The Report of the Emergency Medical Services Working Group to the Commissioner of Public Health and The Commissioner of Social Services***, dated February 1, 2023.

The core findings outlined in the report demonstrate the State's EMS is underfunded and operating in a crisis mode.

As cited above, CTEMSCA support the Governor's recommendation to expend \$1 million dollars to fund a review of Medicaid rates and the rate setting process. This is an excellent step forward.

However, the State EMS System's 911 Ambulance Services are confronting extraordinary financial stress due to the labor shortage requiring increased wages to attract and retain employees, significant operational cost increases secondary to supply chain disruption and inflation while trying to balance their budgets on health insurance reimbursements that have remained flat or decreased over the past several years.

The financial stress is heightened in communities whose 9-1-1 EMS System Ambulances Services provide service a disproportionate share of Medicaid Beneficiaries. The State Medicaid Fee Schedule reimburses ~ 25% of the retail ambulance rates assigned annually by the State Office of Emergency Medical Services. Additionally, the State's Medicaid Fee Schedule rates are ~ 32% less than the current Medicare Fee Schedules rates for Connecticut.

While CTEMSCA is deeply appreciative of the Legislatures support of EMS over the past decade by providing periodic Medicaid Rate increases to the State's EMS services, those increases, pale in comparison to the costs of providing 911 services in Connecticut today. In order to assure the EMS system that has served the State well over the past 5 decades, we need the Appropriations Committee's support in providing initial financial relief to the EMS System Ambulance Services by increasing the current Medicaid Fee Schedule Reimbursement Rates this year to match the current Connecticut Medicare Ambulance Fee Schedule Rates. We realize this is a big request. Without your support, areas of the State, both rural and urban, will likely experience increasing gaps in 911 EMS service access as well as response times. As such your action on this matter is crucial.

If you require additional information or have questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time and willingness to work with us.